

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph on page 1 beginning on line 11 with the following:

Processors, memory devices, field-emission-displays, ~~read/right~~write heads and other microelectronic devices generally have integrated circuits with microelectronic components. A large number of individual microelectronic devices are generally formed on a semiconductor wafer, a glass substrate, or another type microelectronic workpiece. In a typical fabrication process, one or more layers of metal are formed on the workpieces at different stages of fabricating the microelectronic devices to provide material for constructing interconnects between various components.

Please replace the paragraph on page 6 beginning on line 14 with the following:

Figure 8 is a top plan view of a contact system for use in the contact assembly of Figure 87.

Please replace the paragraph on page 12 beginning on line 10 with the following:

The contact assembly 200 further includes a seal 290 having an upper section 291 projecting above the shield 270 and a lower portion 292 in the apertures 284. The upper section 291 has a first edge 293 at least proximate to the inner edge 280 and a second edge 294 at least proximate to the boundary line 282. The second edge 294 accordingly defines the outer perimeter of the seal 290 in this embodiment. The seal 290 can also include a bearing surface 295 for contacting a plating surface 132 of the workpiece 130. The upper section 291 of the seal 290 can have a width defined by the distance between the first edge 293 and the second edge 294. The width of the seal 290 can be approximately 0.02-0.06 inch, and in many applications the width is approximately 0.03-0.05 inch. The upper section 291 of the seal 290 can also have a thickness T of approximately ~~0.2-0.40~~0.02-0.04 inch, and in many applications the thickness T can be approximately 0.025-0.035 inch. In one embodiment, the well-depth

W , which is defined by the thickness of the upper section 291 of the seal 290 and the thickness of the lip region 279 of the shield 270, is not greater than 0.14 inch, and more specifically not greater than approximately 0.06-0.10 inch.

Please replace the paragraph on page 14 beginning on line 21 with the following:

Figure 5 is an isometric view showing a cross-sectional portion of a shield 500 with a seal 510508 for use in a contact assembly in accordance with another embodiment of the invention. The shield 500 can have a first segment 502 and a second segment 504 projecting inwardly from the first segment 502. The shield 500 can also have a lip region 506 at the inner portion of the second segment 504. The first and second segments 502 and 504 of the shield 500 can be substantially similar to the first and second segments 276 and 278 of the shield 270 shown in Figure 4, except that the second segment 504 of the shield 500 does not include a plurality of apertures adjacent to the lip region 506. The seal 510508 can be molded onto the top surface of the lip region 506. Additionally, the seal 510508 can be adhered to the shield 500 by coating the upper surface of the lip 506 with an adhesive before molding the seal 510508 on the shield 500. The shield 500 and the seal 510508 can be composed of the same materials described above with reference to Figure 4.

Please replace the paragraph on page 15 beginning on line 12 with the following:

The seals 510508 and 610 are expected to provide many of the same results and operate in substantially the same manner as the seal 290 shown in Figure 4. The seal 510508 can have a narrower width than the seal 290 shown in Figure 4 because the shield 500 does not have a plurality of apertures at the lip region 506. Conversely, the lower section 292 in the apertures 284 of the shield 270 may provide a better bond between the seal 290 and the shield 270 than the seal 510508 has with the shield 500. The seal 610 shown in Figure 6 can provide a strong bond between the seal 610 and

the shield 600, but the well depth of this system may not be suitable for some applications because the lower section 616 of the shield 610 may inhibit bubbles from flowing off of the plating surface of the workpiece during a plating cycle.